



## LOUISIANA SENATE

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### **SENATOR THOMPSON AND UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE STUDY GROUP MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO FAA REGARDING RULES ON USE OF DRONES**

District 34 State Senator Francis Thompson (D-Delhi), Chairman of the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Study Group, has asked the federal government to loosen restrictions on the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, also known as drones.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is in the process of changing rules and regulations regarding drones and is gathering public comment from around the country. The new rules are expected to be released in November and will come into effect in the coming years.

In response to this call for public comment, Sen. Thompson and the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Study Group issued a number of recommendations to the FAA. The recommendations, among other things, suggest that commercial use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles be regulated by guidelines separate from the established regulations for civil or commercial aircraft and that states be given the ability to develop additional regulatory policies beyond the general operation and safety guidelines established by the FAA.

Sen. Thompson says that when used properly, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles have the potential to become a highly lucrative, efficient and money-saving tool in forestry and agriculture. From surveying diseased plants in crop fields to identifying insect outbreaks in forests, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles have the potential to provide a detailed view of agriculture operations.

“We are very concerned about the impact these changes will have on the agricultural interests of Louisiana,” said Sen. Thompson. “Louisiana farmers are just beginning to understand the benefits that Unmanned Aerial Vehicles can have on their crops by reducing energy costs, effectively managing nutrients and saving water resources. Our agricultural resources and university programs, such as the drone program at ULM, need flexibility to continue to research and discover the many advantages and efficiencies drones can provide for the industry. Our recommendations to the FAA will help to ensure that this happens.”

Sen. Thompson created the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Study group during the 2014 legislative session. His Senate Concurrent Resolution 124 established the group to study the use and application of drones for agricultural purposes and to recommend any action or legislation that the group deems necessary or appropriate. The group is comprised of 16 participants from various sectors of the agriculture, aviation, public safety, and emergency response industries, as well as, representatives from public university systems.

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